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SUBJECT: DOMINICAN ELECTION # 40: FERNANDEZ CONFIDENT BUT  
CONCERNED ABOUT FRAUD

[1](#)1. (SBU) This is no. 40 in our series on the Dominican presidential election:

FERNANDEZ CONCERNED ABOUT FRAUD BUT CONFIDENT IN ABILITY TO RESTORE PROGRESS

On April 13 at luncheon with the Ambassador PLD presidential candidate Leonel Fernandez spent the first third of the encounter focusing on concerns over possible electoral fraud. Fernandez then contrasted his previous administration and the current PLD platform with the "flawed" Mejia administration. Fernandez confirmed that if elected, he would maintain strong relations with the United States.

With polls now showing the PLD margin lower than before, Fernandez, VP candidate Rafael Albuquerque, advisor and 2000 presidential candidate Danilo Medina, and "ideologue" Temistocles Montas identified various relatively minor technical problems with the electoral process, they avowed themselves more concerned with President Mejia's authoritarian tendencies. Fernandez went so far as to say Mejia resembled dictator Trujillo in some ways and noted that Mejia's father was named in honor of the dictator. Fernandez warned that Mejia was using extensive public resources and might employ intimidation tactics to ensure his reelection bid.

The Ambassador outlined U.S measures to reinforce the election process and shifted the conversation towards perspectives of a PLD government toward the United States. The PLD is the only major Dominican party to have published a detailed platform, but its platform is noticeably vague with respect to bilateral relations with the United States. Fernandez emphasized that the Dominican Republic will be an unconditional U.S. ally in the fight against terrorism. He will support existing cooperative efforts with the U.S. government in areas such as extradition, counter-narcotics, free trade, and trafficking in persons.

The tone of the PLD luncheon was positive and the content generally substantive. Fernandez, a lawyer educated in the United States, uses an intellectual social science perspective to analyze Dominican politics. His positive electoral prospects are due in large part to the positive performance of the Dominican economy throughout his previous administration -- results not entirely of his own making. The PLD platform promises to promote economic growth while enacting further modernization and privatization reforms. Though concerned about the prospect of his main opponent resorting to dirty fighting in the final weeks, Fernandez appears confident in his ability to recapture the presidency and eventually to restore economic progress in the Dominican Republic.

[1](#)2. (U) Drafted by Clare Ribando.

[1](#)3. (U) This report and others in this series can be read on the SIPRNET at <http://www.state.gov/p/pwha/santodomingo/inde x.cfm> along with extensive other current material.  
HERTELL